



National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/STTR) Supplemental Funding for Diversity Collaborations

Dear Colleague Letter —

The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs, in collaboration with the Centers for Research Excellence in Science and Technology (CREST) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities Research Infrastructure for Science and Engineering (HBCU-RISE), seek to fund supplements to current SBIR/STTR Phase II awards that:

- foster partnerships between the academic and small business communities;
- increase participation of underrepresented groups in both academic and small business research; and
- encourage members of underrepresented groups to pursue careers in science and engineering.

The Directorate for Engineering's Office of Industrial Innovation (OII) SBIR/STTR programs, in collaboration with the Directorate for Education and Human Resources' Division of Human Resource Development (HRD), invites all active SBIR/STTR Phase II, CREST, and RISE grantees to participate.

OVERVIEW OF WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED. The Small Business Minority Academic Research Partnership Supplement (henceforth to be referred to as SBIR/STTR Phase IIA) will award a research supplement to a current SBIR/STTR Phase II grantee able to partner with a CREST/RISE institution. The goals of the supplemental research are to:

- further the understanding of the SBIR/STTR Phase II research;
- facilitate the development of a stronger technology base within the SBIR/STTR organization;
- investigate the scientific or engineering underpinnings of the SBIR Phase II technology;
- utilize the NSF HRD supported research capabilities of the CREST/RISE institutions; and
- enhance the educational objectives associated with NSF HRD support.

CREST/RISE institutions interested in identifying and seeking possible partnerships with SBIR/STTR Phase II grantees should consult the NSF interactive award search system (reference: <http://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch>; under *Search Award For*, enter *SBIR Phase II* or *STTR Phase II* and check *Active Awards Only*). Also, a listing of eligible CREST/RISE institutions may be found at <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2005/nsf0520/nsf0520.pdf>.

It is expected that key personnel from the small business and CREST/RISE institution will lead the proposed efforts and, along with doctoral and postdoctoral students, will be engaged in supported activities.

A SBIR/STTR PI or CREST/RISE co-PI contemplating the development of a proposal for supplemental funding in response to this *Dear Colleague Letter* should discuss with their cognizant program officer the planned work well before submitting a supplemental proposal.

ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Organization Limit: Only currently funded SBIR/STTR Phase II grantees, partnering with currently funded CREST and/or RISE grantees, are eligible to submit proposals for supplemental funding under this initiative.

PI Eligibility Limit: The Principal Investigator must be the PI of an active SBIR/STTR Phase II award.

Limit on Number of Proposals:

- None

AWARD INFORMATION

- Awards will be made as supplements to active SBIR/STTR Phase II awards;
- Maximum supplemental award amount: \$150,000 for a total duration of no more than two years;
- Minimum of 70% of supplement available as sub-award to partner CREST/RISE institution;
- Maximum of 30% of supplement (including overhead) available to SBIR/STTR institution;
- Eight (8) supplemental awards anticipated for Fiscal Year 2006; and
- Awards subject to the availability of funds.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposal Preparation Instructions. Proposals submitted in response to this Dear Colleague Letter must be prepared and submitted according to the instructions for submitting supplemental funding requests (reference: <http://www.nsf.gov/eng/iip/sbir/>, under *Requests for Supplements*).

The Project Description is limited to 15 pages, single spaced, and must include the following components:

1. Clear description of the project activity including a section describing the connection of the research to the CREST/RISE supported research;
2. Justification of the funds requested, and a supporting budget; and
3. Identification of key personnel who will lead the effort. Their roles must be clearly articulated.

The small business typically retains the intellectual property rights of SBIR/STTR projects supported by the Federal Government. It is strongly suggested that an agreement between the small business and the CREST/RISE institution be in place at the time of the submission of the supplemental proposal to ensure that all parties understand the ownership of the technology supported by the grant. An example of a cooperative agreement can be found at: http://www.nsf.gov/eng/iip/sbir/cooperative_agreement.jsp

Budgetary Information. Budgets for SBIR/STTR Phase IIA supplemental proposals may not exceed \$150,000 for a total duration of no more than two years. It is expected that \$1,200,000 will be available in Fiscal Year 2006 for this supplemental funding, pending availability of funds.

Deadline Dates. There are no deadlines for Phase IIA supplemental requests, but requests should be made as early as possible in the fiscal year to assure availability.

PROPOSAL REVIEW INFORMATION

Proposals for supplemental funding submitted in response to this *Dear Colleague Letter* will be reviewed based upon the two National Science Board approved merit review criteria listed below, and the Additional Review Criteria that follow them:

What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity?

How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields? How well qualified is the proposer (individual or team) to conduct the project? (If appropriate, the reviewer will comment on the quality of the prior work.) To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore creative and original concepts? How well conceived and organized is the proposed activity? Is there sufficient access to resources?

What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?

How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training, and learning? How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, disability, geographic, etc.)? To what extent will it enhance the infrastructure for research and education, such as facilities, instrumentation, networks, and partnerships? Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding? What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society?

ADDITIONAL REVIEW CRITERIA:

The SBIR/STTR program has **additional** criteria that reflect the legislative emphasis of the program and which are associated with the standard NSF review criteria listed above. The additional review criteria for Phase IIA are as follows:

What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity?

1. Is the proposed plan a sound approach to strengthening the Phase II technology and to what extent does the proposal enhance the Phase II research, e.g., innovative measurements, methods, experiments, evaluation studies or further understanding of the technology?
2. How well qualified are the research team, the intellectual leader of the subaward, and other key staff to conduct the proposed activity?
3. Is there sufficient access to resources (materials and supplies, analytical services, equipment, facilities, etc.)?
4. Does the proposed research demonstrate a clear connection to the CREST/RISE supported research?

What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?

1. What may be the societal benefits of the proposed activity?
2. Does the proposed research lead to enabling technologies (instrumentation, software, etc.) for further discoveries?
3. Does the proposed research serve to enhance the commercial competitiveness of this Phase II technology?
4. Does the proposed project broaden participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines?

CONTACT PERSONNEL

Questions about this letter should be directed to Sara Nerlove (703-292-7077, snerlove@nsf.gov), Office of Industrial Innovation, Directorate for Engineering, or Victor Santiago 703-292-4673, vsantiag@nsf.gov) Division of Human Resource Development, Directorate for Education and Human Resources.

Other Supplemental Opportunities of Interest

All active SBIR/STTR Phase II grantees are invited to participate in a new supplemental funding opportunity, Research Assistantships for High School Students (RAHSS) (reference: <http://www.nsf.gov/eng/iip/sbir/>, under *Requests for Supplements*). NSF seeks to broaden the participation of high school students, particularly women, underrepresented minorities, and persons with disabilities, in both academic and small business research and to encourage these students to pursue careers in science and engineering. RAHSS recipients may work with the small business concern or with the partner institution. The RAHSS supplements are for one to two students, for up to \$6000 per student per project year.

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